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IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21

Estimates of costs for the United Nations Environment Programme to implement fully those parts of Agenda 21 recommended for its attention

Report of the Executive Director

Summary

The present report was prepared in response to Governing Council decision 17/32, which requested the Executive Director to present to the Council at its eighteenth session her estimates of the costs for the Programme fully to implement those parts of Agenda 21 specifically recommended for the United Nations Environment Programme's attention.

Suggested action by the Governing Council

The Governing Council may wish to take note of the present report.

* UNEP/GC.18/1.

ESTIMATES OF COSTS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME TO IMPLEMENT FULLY THOSE PARTS OF AGENDA 21 RECOMMENDED FOR ITS ATTENTION

1. In its decision 17/32, the Governing Council requested the Executive Director to present to the Council at its next session her estimates of the costs for the Programme fully to implement those parts of Agenda 21 specifically recommended for the United Nations Environment Programme's attention. The present report has been prepared in response to that request.

2. The secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had estimated the average annual costs (1993-2000) of implementing in developing countries the activities in Agenda 21 to be over US$ 600 billion, including about US$ 125 billion on grant or concessional terms from the international community (Agenda 21, para. 33.18). A breakdown per chapter of Agenda 21 is given under the section "Means of implementation" of each chapter. Agenda 21 states that all these estimates are indicative and order-of-magnitude estimates only, and have not been reviewed by Governments. Actual costs would depend upon, inter alia, the specific strategies and programmes Governments decide upon for implementation.

3. Up till now Governments have not yet reviewed the order-of-magnitude estimates. Until they have done so, it does not seem appropriate for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) secretariat, which cooperated in the preparation of the estimates, to alter them.

4. As stated in the Executive Director's report on environment and sustainable development (UNEP/GC.18/27), protecting the physical environment requires a broader consideration of issues of sustainable development. Environmentally sound development requires implementation of Agenda 21. This implies that all chapters of Agenda 21 are of relevance to UNEP's mission and work. Achieving a healthy environment for present and future generations would have a cost equal to the cost of implementing Agenda 21.

5. The same document analyses the role and responsibilities of UNEP vis-à-vis the Commission on Sustainable Development and concludes that UNEP, with a view to, inter alia, avoiding duplication of efforts and in the light of resource constraints, should set priorities within the scope of its mandate and, to ensure that they are met, must focus on issues of the physical environment while also addressing their social, economic and political contexts.

6. Acknowledging this and based on the parts of Agenda 21 specifically recommended for UNEP's attention, the proposed programme for the utilization of resources of the Environment Fund for the biennium 1996-1997 has been drawn up. The estimated cost of this programme is US$ 105 million and is based on the assessment of the voluntary contributions to the Environment Fund in that biennium.